

# RecordsManager

## State Budget Crisis Wallops The Library of Virginia

BY C. Preston Huff, CRM, CA, State Records Administrator

The past couple of years have been increasingly tough on state agencies in the Commonwealth. The worsening budget crisis has long-term state workers shaking their heads in amazement. None of these workers can remember such a time in state government. The Library of Virginia, like other state agencies, has been hit with several rounds of deep budget reductions during the past two years.

The cumulative effect has been a 28 percent permanent reduction in the Library's overall general fund appropriation (22 percent of that occurring with the 7 and 15 percent reductions this fiscal year). The Library has had to absorb a disproportionate amount of these cuts internally rather than pass them on in full measure to localities and other state agencies that receive funding through the Library's budget. Thus, the net effect of the past two years (including the 15 percent reduction announced by Governor Warner on October 15, 2002) has been a loss to the Library's internal operating budget of a staggering 39 percent.

The most painful part of the budget cuts has been the elimination of jobs in all areas of the Library. The Library's senior management team did everything that they could do in order to not eliminate positions. But the severity of the budget situation was just too much to keep this from happening. We have laid off 23 full-time staff (out of a maximum employment level of 216) and 17 part-time staff, and

have 19 vacant positions that will not be filled—leaving a total staffing shortfall of 59 valued individuals.

Some of the results of this latest round of cuts are:

- **Elimination of the Imaging Services Branch.** This branch has been a central program at the agency for decades. The staff of this unit performed preservation microfilming services to exacting standards and requirements. The group primarily was focused on microfilming the irreplaceable historic documents housed in the Library. It also provided services to localities, state agencies and to the public. (More on this later in this article).
- **Elimination of the Digital Library Program.** This innovative program utilized the latest technology in providing access to our most heavily used and sometimes fragile historic photographs and documents via our Web site. People from around the world visit the Web site and review the thousands of images found there. This program had been a model for other states and we often received queries from others interested in establishing such a program for their organizations.
- **Reduction of collection development budget** (purchasing of books, manuscripts, journals, and databases) by 45 percent.
- **Elimination of *Virginia Cavalcade* magazine,** the Library's award-winning quarterly illustrated magazine of Virginia history and culture. The magazine had been published continuously since 1951.
- **Elimination of the Publications Division** as a separate organizational unit, with key editorial functions and staff consolidated within another division.
- **Significant slippage** in archival processing targets addressing the collections backlog.
- **Reduction by 22 percent** of state funding for local libraries, which is administered through the Library of Virginia's budget. This will have a serious impact on the hours, book buying, and staffing of local libraries across the Commonwealth.
- **Elimination** of the Virginia Center for the Book Program
- **Elimination of all state funding** for the Infopowering the Commonwealth initiative, which provides citizens and libraries access to a wide array of key information databases.
- **Elimination of Educational Programs,** including teacher workshops, tours for K through 12 students, and other activities that open the Library's resources to a younger audience.

see Cuts page 3

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THE commonwealth

## RecordsManager

This newsletter is published twice a year, in the summer and winter, to keep the records officers of the Commonwealth of Virginia apprised of their responsibilities as the caretakers of state and local government public records. Reader participation is invited.



### Records Management and Imaging Services Division

800 East Broad Street  
Richmond, Virginia 23219  
(804) 692-3600 • (804) 692-3603 fax  
<http://www.lva.lib.va.us>  
E-mail: [recman@lva.lib.va.us](mailto:recman@lva.lib.va.us)

Nolan T. Yelich  
*Librarian of Virginia*

C. Preston Huff, CRM, CA  
*State Records Administrator*  
692-3607; [phuff@lva.lib.va.us](mailto:phuff@lva.lib.va.us)

Robert F. Nawrocki, CRM  
*Electronic Records Coordinator*  
692-3505; [rnawrocki@lva.lib.va.us](mailto:rnawrocki@lva.lib.va.us)

Benjamin B. Smith  
*Manager, State Records Center*  
236-3711; [bbsmith@lva.lib.va.us](mailto:bbsmith@lva.lib.va.us)

Suie W. Woo  
*Supervisor, Imaging Services*  
236-3707; [swoo@lva.lib.va.us](mailto:swoo@lva.lib.va.us)

### Records Analysis Section, Records and Information Management Analysts

John Breeden, CRM  
*Manager, Records Analysis Section*  
692-3612; [jbreed@lva.lib.va.us](mailto:jbreed@lva.lib.va.us)

Frank English  
692-3610; [fenglish@lva.lib.va.us](mailto:fenglish@lva.lib.va.us)

William Henson, CRM  
692-3611; [whenson@lva.lib.va.us](mailto:whenson@lva.lib.va.us)

Russ Riter  
692-3609; [rriter@lva.lib.va.us](mailto:rriter@lva.lib.va.us)

Patrice W. Morgan  
*Program Support Technician*  
692-3600; [pmorgan@lva.lib.va.us](mailto:pmorgan@lva.lib.va.us)

Joanne R. Smith, CLA  
*Editor/Analyst*  
692-3608; [jsmith@lva.lib.va.us](mailto:jsmith@lva.lib.va.us)

# SCAN-ON, ASSESSING IMAGE QUALITY

By R.M. Harrington, Manager Imaging Services

[This is the last article of this series, previous articles may be obtained from the Records Management Web site – Editor]

In typical digital image systems, paper documents are scanned and indexed. Most current users of an imaging system scan business type documents composed primarily of bitonal text (black and white), this article will not discuss grayscale or color image quality. Image quality control is necessary to assure that the captured images are of acceptable quality and retain all the detail of the original document. If the scanner is not operating properly or the settings are incorrect for the type of document being scanned, then poor images are created. The factors affecting how well details are successfully captured from a document by a scanner are the type and complexity of the original document, the various character fonts used and their sizes, the color of the text and background, how light or dark the text appears and the shading that may occur between the two extremes. How do you assess scanned image quality?

One way is to compare a current scan of a standard target against a known reference. This allows a non-technical user to easily make judgment calls about system and image quality. To establish the quality reference, the scanner needs to be adjusted to provide the best results for the documents being scanned. This is done in consultation with the vendor selling the imaging system. If all documents are to be scanned as received, then the scanner setup used for the quality reference should reflect the best compromise of settings for the various types of originals.

Next, choose a standard resolution target according to the type of documents being scanned. If the originals are photographic, use a photographic test chart. If general business documents are being scanned, use a typical ink-on-paper target. Resolution targets are used to measure many factors and help to maintain a consistent quality of output from the scanner. Originally, they were designed for the photographic industry, but new ones have been adapted for use with digital systems. Some of the more commonly used resolution targets for digital systems are the IEEE (Institute of Electrical and Electronic Engineers) standard facsimile test chart, the AIIM Scanner Test Chart #2, RIT's (Rochester Institute of Technology) alphanumeric test object, and the PM-189 (A & P International) resolution target. Unlike the targets used in the photographic industry that show how well an image or system reproduces a document, these targets demonstrate when an image or system has failed to produce acceptable reproduction of document detail. Results can be inconclusive due to variations in scanner lighting, sampling errors, or target density, but because there are no other practical tools, these easy-to-use targets continue to be instrumental in determining image quality and the consistency of capture devices, particularly with bitonal images. The AIIM Scanner Test Chart #2 is the one that should be used for general business documents.

Scan the target and print it on standard paper, recording the scanner adjustment settings and the current date on this hard copy. Saving both the digital image and the hard copy of this target becomes the quality reference. This process needs to be repeated for each type or batch of documents that are treated differently with the scanner settings. Any maintenance performed on a scanner can affect the output. If a technician recalibrates a scanner, then the test run procedures above need to be repeated and the new proper settings and date recorded on the new hard copy printout. This new one is then compared to the original printout. If the quality targets are not similar, then the service was not performed properly or the scanner has a problem. Running the test targets before signing off on maintenance and comparing them to the original scans is a good practice. It is easier to correct the problem while the technician is already there, than to make another service call.

Scan the target each week, or if the system is heavily used, scan each morning before beginning the actual work for the day. Print the target each time and date it. ...see Scan-On page 7

## Cuts...

- **Significant reduction** of the State Documents Depository Program, which provides citizens with access to state publications through local libraries.
- **Significant reduction** in services to state agency libraries.

It is difficult to accurately describe the impact of these cuts. We are just beginning to come to terms with the enormity of these steps. It has been painful for the many fine staff members whose positions were eliminated, but it has also been difficult for the survivors who lost colleagues, who were often good friends and trusted resources of information.

## IMAGING SERVICES BRANCH

Most of you were familiar with the Imaging Services Branch since it provided numerous services to all areas of state and local government. At its peak the unit had a staff of 18 full-time and part-time staff. In recent months, due to attrition, this number had declined to just 13 staff members. Three staff members were retained to provide minimal, but necessary, services and the rest were laid off. The remaining staff includes: Sue Woo, Dwight Sunderlin, and Belinda Pillow. Belinda, who has been a field operator for many years, was reassigned from the City of Norfolk Circuit Court Clerk's Office to provide support for this now very small unit. We no longer have field operators. Once we had five operators fanning out to the far reaches of the state microfilming the vital records of the Clerk's offices.

In the past year, Richard "Dick" Harrington, manager of the Imaging Services Branch, and I had begun to recognize that the preservation microfilming field was changing. We noticed that there was no longer a U.S.-based manufacturer of 35mm cameras and European cameras to replace our aging cameras were costing \$80,000 each. We observed that the company that made our processors had gone bankrupt forcing us to buy another brand of processor—however we were less than satisfied with its quality. There were numerous other signs of changes that convinced us that another direction was in the cards. We began to explore the possibility of converting this operation into a digital imaging lab. Early indications were quite promising. Our customers have already begun to request digital images of their records instead of the usual, tried and true, but increasingly unpopular microfilm.

We were beginning to share this vision of the future of this unit with our stakeholders when the budget crisis hit. Faced with the unpleasant task of prioritizing programs at the Library, we recognized that the unit was indeed at a crossroads and an obvious candidate for elimination. The long-range plan is to resurrect the unit as a digital imaging lab but that will have to wait for a significant turnaround in the economy. It could be quite some time before that occurs. One positive that results from this is that we no longer will be on the "bleeding edge" of transitioning from a preservation microfilming unit to a digital imaging lab. We can now wait for other organizations to blaze that path and learn from their experiences.

Obviously, a huge loss to our program is that along with the other fine staff of this unit, Dick Harrington is also no longer with the Library of Virginia. Dick had been with the Library for nearly 30 years and was well known by many of you. He was a tremendous source of knowledge about the imaging field and is undoubtedly one of the most knowledgeable people about local government record-

keeping in Virginia. His colleagues at the Library of Virginia, as well as many of you, will miss him. Although the calls have begun to come in from those who would be interested in obtaining his services, Dick plans to stick to the central Virginia area, which he has come to love so much.

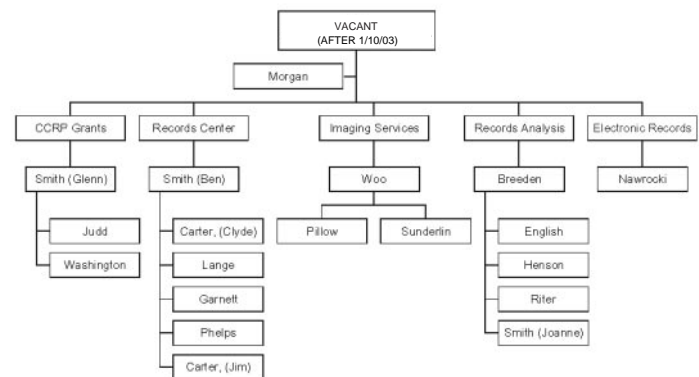
With only three people on staff in this area we obviously are limited in the scope of services that we can now offer. The services that we will still provide are:

- **Basic QC** on incoming microfilm from localities, state agencies and vendors.
- **Maintain the ARMIS** database which is used to track the 280,000 reels of security microfilm that contain millions of permanently valuable records such as deeds, plats, wills, board minutes and school records.
- **Duplicate reels** of security microfilm as requested. One duplicator will be kept for this purpose, but we will also use outside vendors for jobs that we cannot handle.
- **Make reader-printer copies** of records from the security microfilm as requested.
- **Produce microfilm** from the Kodak Archive Writer. No new customers will be accepted.
- **Provide advice** as able.

The staff is wrapping up the remaining projects that were in progress when the announcement was made on October 10th to eliminate the unit. After completion of these few projects, the staff will begin the process of surplusing the equipment. The unit will no longer provide source microfilming services and film processing.

The remaining staff, Sue, Dwight, and Belinda, are dedicated to meeting your needs to the maximum extent possible. I hope that you will understand that these are extraordinary times in our state and agency and that there are services which they and we are no longer able to perform. If you have any concerns or questions, please bring them to my attention by calling us at (804) 692-3600 or via e-mail (recman@lva.lib.va.us).

We are hopeful that the cuts are not going to get any worse, but there are signs that further belt-tightening is looming in fiscal year 2004. We remain hopeful that the economy will improve soon and that we can put all of this behind us and focus on the future of our program.



Current Records Management and Imaging Services  
Division organization



# Records Management Workshops

There is no charge for these courses. All designated Records Officers and others who have records management responsibilities should attend. Details and registration forms are available on our Web site or call us at (804) 692-3600. For more information on the workshops or to register on line go to <http://www.lva.lib.va.us/whatwedo/records/retrain/index.htm>. Any changes or additions will be posted to our Web site.

## Please Note—We Have A New Workshop “Using the State Records Center”

### Basic Records Management

The essentials of public records management are discussed, including the Virginia Public Records Act, retention schedules, records surveys, electronic records, records disposal, and disaster preparedness.

Jan 29, 2003	Library of Virginia Richmond 9:00 – 11:30 A.M.
Mar 19, 2003	Chesapeake Library Chesapeake 9:00 – 11:30 A.M.
Apr 1, 2003	Library of Virginia Richmond 9:00 – 11:30 A.M.
Jun 18, 2003	Four Points Sheraton, 900 Prices Fork Road Blacksburg, 9:00 - 11:30 A.M.
Jul 23, 2003	Library of Virginia Richmond 9:00 – 11:30 A.M.
Oct 22, 2003	Library of Virginia Richmond 9:00 – 11:30 A.M.

### Intermediate Records Management

In this workshop, we will discuss how to present and promote records management within your agency or locality, topics include obtaining program support, implementing a program, coordinating Records Officers' duties with other responsibilities, and continuing education.

Apr 2, 2003	Library of Virginia Richmond, 9:00 - 11:30 A.M.
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### Document Imaging

This workshop discusses how to procure, implement, and operate an imaging system. It is geared toward individuals with responsibilities for purchasing, installing, or managing these systems.

Apr 3, 2003	Library of Virginia Richmond, 9:00 - 11:30 A.M.
Oct 22, 2003	Library of Virginia Richmond, 1:00 - 3:30 P.M.

### Disaster Planning For Your Records

The Virginia Public Records Act requires state agencies and localities to develop plans to ensure the preservation of public records in the event of disaster or emergency. This workshop explains how to anticipate and mitigate disasters by identifying vulnerabilities, establish procedures to follow in the event of a disaster, and use the *Workbook for Developing a Disaster Plan*.

Jan 29, 2003	Library of Virginia Richmond, 1:00 - 3:30 P.M.
Apr 2, 2003	Library of Virginia Richmond, 1:00 - 3:30 P.M.

### Managing Electronic Records

Topics to be discussed include types of electronic records, advantages and disadvantages of formats, the Freedom of Information and Government Data Collection and Dissemination Practices acts, retention schedules, e-mail, and destruction of electronic records.

Mar 19, 2003	Chesapeake Library Chesapeake, 1:00 - 3:30 P.M.
Apr 3, 2003	Library of Virginia Richmond, 1:00 - 3:30 P.M.
Jun 18, 2003	Four Points Sheraton, 900 Prices Fork Road Blacksburg, 1:00- 3:30 P.M.
Jul 23, 2003	Library of Virginia Richmond, 1:00 - 3:30 P.M.

### New Technologies

This workshop is intended to keep records officers abreast of new technologies and how they affect records management. Topics include imaging systems, electronic document management systems, microfilm, and electronic records management systems.

Apr 1, 2003	Library of Virginia Richmond, 1:00 - 3:30 P.M.
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### Using the State Records Center

The State Records Center is a facility for the secure, efficient, and economical storage of inactive records that will be destroyed when you no longer need them. This workshop tells you what records can be stored in the State Records Center, how to send records for storage, how to retrieve them, and what happens when you no longer need the records. This workshop is recommended for anyone currently storing records, or considering storing records, at the State Records Center.

Jan 29, 2003	Library of Virginia Richmond, 1:00 - 3:30 P.M.
Apr 4, 2003	State Records Center Richmond, 9:00 - 11:30 A.M.  and  State Records Center Richmond, 1:00 - 3:30 P.M.



# NEW DIMENSION FOR THE OLD DOMINION

## The Evolution of Elections and Voting in Virginia

### PART THREE OF A THREE PART SERIES

BY G.L. Lamborn, General Registrar, City of Fairfax & Alice McKenna, Esquire, Officer of Election, City of Fairfax

#### *Today's Electoral Systems*

As Virginia enters the twenty-first century, it enjoys a tradition unmatched by any other state. It has behind it nearly four centuries of self-government. The price that Virginia paid for this experience has been high. Whereas the newer states of the midwest and far west had the advantage of copying the more successful models of the original thirteen—thereby avoiding many mistakes that “older states” made from time to time—Virginia from the beginning had to find her own way through painful trial and error. Yet, despite the difficulties—and especially Virginia's self-inflicted wounds in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries—the Commonwealth has developed one of the sturdiest electoral systems in the United States.

In keeping with traditions going back to colonial days when sheriffs conducted elections, assisted by justices of the peace, present-day electoral boards and general registrars are carefully kept separate constitutionally from the elected officers of state and local governments whose elections they oversee. Thus, each electoral board is appointed by the circuit court serving the jurisdiction from which the board is chosen. The possibility of “undue influence” of the electoral process by elected officials, or blatant partisan control, is therefore minimized.

The electoral board in turn appoints a general registrar to a four-year term of office. By law, electoral board members and general registrars must be residents of, and registered voters in, the jurisdictions they serve. This ensures accountability of local election officials to their communities, and encourages them to be responsive to local needs and conditions.

The foundation upon which free and fair elections are conducted is the integrity of the voter registration process. The general registrar must ensure that all persons who meet the qualifications specified in the Virginia Constitution of 1971 and the *Code of Virginia* are enrolled as registered voters. The voter registration rolls thus play a central role in preparing for local, state, and national elections. By law, these rolls are open to public inspection by any registered voter presenting himself at the general registrar's Office. Throughout the year the general registrar's staff works to ensure that the List of Registered Voters is accurate. Each day the staff adds new qualified voters and deletes those who have died, moved away, or become disqualified from voting.

The 1993 National Voting Rights Act (known as NVRA) affords citizens the opportunity to register to vote by mail or through Department of Motor Vehicles. These two new channels have sharply increased the volume of registrants, and thus have added greatly to the workload of general registrars and their staffs. However, despite the increased workload, in many jurisdictions registrar staffing, floor

space and salaries have not kept pace with the general registrars' rapidly expanding responsibilities.

Throughout Virginia, electoral boards meet periodically throughout the year to ensure that the general registrar's office is functioning as prescribed by law, and to prepare for elections. Each Board consists of three members, two of whom must be members of the Governor's party. One member is appointed each year for a term of three years. By law the Chairman and Secretary must be members of opposing political parties. Yet above all, the electoral board is a true bi-partisan body which works for the impartiality and integrity of the electoral process.

Elections require intensive planning and preparation. With the assistance of their general registrars, electoral boards must identify suitable polling places, acquire and test voting and other equipment, recruit and train officers of election, and obtain technical support and financial resources. For example, in the City of Fairfax, the general registrar serves the board as its technical expert on election law and procedures, voting machines, ballot formulation, and officer and election page training. The general registrar also maintains candidates' filing and financial records, tracks all petitions, and serves as notary public, budget officer, and in many other capacities. The scope of a general registrar's responsibilities varies from jurisdiction to jurisdiction depending upon the wishes of the

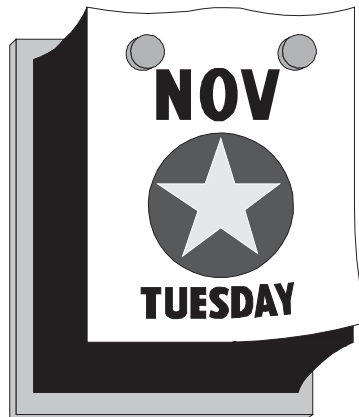
electoral board and local conditions.

There are two “invisible pillars” supporting a community's elections. The first of these is a corps of trained officers of election (known in some states as “election judges”) who staff the jurisdiction's polling stations. These officers must be registered voters of the jurisdiction who are not elected officials or deputies of such officials, and who subscribe to an Oath of Office pledging to serve impartially. Each officer puts in a 14-16 hour day on Election Day, in addition to pre-election training mandated by law. The pay is small; Virginia's election officers serve their fellow citizens from a sense of duty, civic pride, and a firm belief in the democratic process. Sadly, many jurisdictions find themselves perennially short of volunteers willing to serve.

Through recent legislative action by the General Assembly, election pages are beginning to join the election officers in service to their communities. The pages are high school students who are used in polling stations to assist the officers of election, help voters—especially the elderly and disabled—to safely enter and depart from the polls, and to learn about Virginia's election procedures by observation. It is hoped that the election pages will become active voters and better citizens through their Election Day experience working at the polls.

The other “invisible pillar” is the professional staff of each county or chartered city. Without the support of local schools, police and

*see Dimension, page 7*



## **Building a Solid Records Management Program for Stafford County**

BY Joanne R. Smith, CLA, Records and Information Management Analyst



Nancy Collins

Not everyone jumps up and down begging to be selected as the county records manager. Most “candidates” are selected by chance, or someone leaving a position. That’s what happened to **Nancy Collins**, the records manager for **Stafford County**. Nancy inherited the responsibility when her supervisor left for another position, and one of her first official acts as a records manager was to attend a Library of Virginia Basic Records Management Workshop. The workshop provided support for the new

records manager and left her feeling a little less intimidated by the task. Nancy moved forward with her plan. The fact that Stafford County established a records management committee with representatives from each department helped coordinate efforts. Plus training workshops were conducted on site by the Library of Virginia. Nancy joined the Virginia Association of Government Archives and Records Administrators (VAGARA) and has attended two annual conferences. She found the information available through VAGARA to be very helpful.

The first step is getting started and Stafford County has made some important changes in their records management program, they are almost ready to open a records storage facility. This facility will centrally house inactive records, which will be located and tracked

using a computer software system. This system also will keep track of retention schedules and destruction dates. This will help to organize the records and dispose of unnecessary paper, clearing out much needed office space. This project has given records management high visibility within Stafford County; many departments are reporting that this initiative has caused a real evaluation of their records.

The records management committee’s mission statement states, “we want to ensure the most effective and efficient handling of records in whatever format they are stored.” Nancy thinks that the committee idea works well, with monthly meetings and department contributions. It’s amazing what ownership can do to help a project along. It also removes the “finger pointing” variable from the equation. The committee goals are Nancy’s goals, and she is striving daily to scratch the surface of electronic records management and retention. She plans on achieving her goals by education and teamwork.

She has a few words of advice for her fellow records officers, network and call around and ask others who have already done what you are trying to do. The Stafford County Committee visited the Prince William County storage facility several times. Prince William County staff members were extremely helpful and gracious. Nancy’s records management philosophy is, “be patient, change is slow, don’t be surprised if things take longer and cost more than you planned.”

Nancy is married with two children; she enjoys reading, cooking, step aerobics and tandem bicycling. She is active in the Fredericksburg Cyclists and Rappahannock Toastmasters, and recently received her MBA from Virginia Tech. If you can’t find Nancy building a solid records management program in Stafford County, you might be able

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## **University Records Manager Fine Tunes Universal Program**

BY Frank English, Records and Information Management Analyst



Anne Hakes

**George Mason University (GMU)** has a multitasking university records manager in **Anne Hakes**. Anne originally trained as a high school teacher; her first position was in K-12 educational research. She researched topics for teachers and administrators all over the country. Her love of history led her next to work as a Historian/Archivist for the National Society of the Daughters of the American Revolution (DAR). In 2000, she joined the staff at GMU as the university records manager. It is a wonderful combination, to

have an agency records manager who is also an archivist. Anne now interacts with students, staff, faculty and a wide variety of researchers from all over the globe. At GMU she not only operates the GMU records management program, but she assists University Archives in the acquisition, preservation and interpretation of permanent records. Anne also participates in collection development with the Rare Books and Manuscript Collections and assists staff and patrons in the reading room.

As GMU’s records officer, Anne loves the opportunity to interact with the varied university staff at all levels. She enjoys

helping them make sense of their records. She does her best to insure that historic records are preserved. Anne recently authored a new university policy on records management. She loves the university environment and is eager to learn everything about the university. Anne was proud to state that a faculty member had just won a Nobel Prize.

She is an active member of the Virginia Association of Government Archivists and Records Managers (VAGARA) and she served as the Registration Chairman for the 18th Annual VAGARA Conference in Lynchburg. GMU hosts the VAGARA Web site.

Anne has an undergraduate degree in history from the College of William and Mary and a graduate degree from George Mason University. She has lived in northern Virginia all of her life and has a large family in the area. She is a season ticket holder for the Washington Redskins, volunteers and serves on the board of her local homeless coalition. Anne’s hobbies include making stained glass.

If you would like to talk with someone about college or university records management, we recommend Anne at [ahakes@gmu.edu](mailto:ahakes@gmu.edu) or (703) 993-2201.

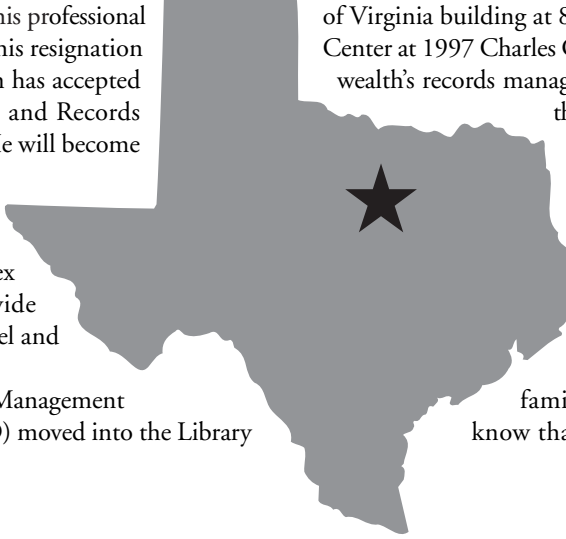
# Preston Huff's Excellent New Adventure

BY Joanne Smith, CLA Records and Information Management Analyst

Calling it the most difficult decision of his professional career, C. Preston Huff, has submitted his resignation as State Records Administrator. Preston has accepted a position with the National Archives and Records Administration in Fort Worth, Texas. He will become the Assistant Regional Administrator for the Southwest Region, which includes Texas, Oklahoma, Louisiana, and Arkansas. Besides all of the Tex-Mex he can eat, this career move will provide Preston additional opportunities to excel and advance his career.

During the past six years Records Management and Imaging Services Division (RMISD) moved into the Library

of Virginia building at 800 East Broad Street and the State Records Center at 1997 Charles City Road. Preston reorganized the commonwealth's records management program to include: participation in the Council on Technology Services (COTS) and establishing the State Records Center as a premier records center with a national reputation. RMISD received the Iron Mountain Award for Excellence in Records and Information Management (Government) for 2001 as a leader in all areas of records management. Preston will be sorely missed. We wish him and his family the very best for the future. It's nice to know that we will have a friend in Texas.



**Sean-On** (from pg. 2)... Then compare with the original printout. Compare each new copy with the primary one and look for deterioration in the various areas of the target such as the lines or smaller fonts. If it gets to the point that the fonts are blurred when compared to the original document or printout, straight lines look crooked or bent or fine detail cannot be resolved, then a service call should be placed with the vendor.

Some questions to ask when evaluating this test target on your system are:

Are the line widths (thick, medium, and thin) adequately reproduced?

Are the lines straight and smooth (not jagged or curving)?

Is the detail in the smallest test you will be using adequate?

Are the open regions of the lowercase characters retained and not filled in?

Are the edges of individual letters or shapes as smooth or well defined as the original?

Is there good contrast between the text and the background?

Is the text all even in density across the target?

Is there streaking or a gray cast in the background?

Is there a lot of noise (small dots, lines) in the clear areas of the target?

Is the document fully reproduced?

**Dimension** (from pg. 5)... public works departments, community relations and information technology staffs, and even the mailrooms, elections could not take place. Each staff unit plays a valuable, and in some cases critical, role in supporting election operations. Although the Election Day services provided by these staffs are "invisible" to the general public, they are indispensable. These services include directing traffic outside busy polling places, transporting and maintaining voting equipment, publishing or broadcasting voter information, and mailing thousands of registrations, inquiries and Absentee Ballots to Virginia's voters.

The ordinary citizen rarely perceives that elections are complex, major undertakings that require careful planning, advance preparation, and smooth execution on Election Day. Many citizens believe that elections are naturally occurring phenomena like rain showers

or snowstorms. But elections do not simply "happen." They are the products of many people working together as a team, often planning months in advance and coordinating myriad details. The fact that the November 2000 General Election went so smoothly in the Commonwealth is due to the dedication of its election officers, the professionalism of the staff and departments in Virginia's jurisdictions, and to the public-spirited nature of the citizens themselves.

The State Board of Elections, the 135 Electoral Boards and General Registrars, and the thousands of Virginia's Election Officers and community staff employees have done their best to conduct elections with professionalism and integrity. We hope to continue to prove ourselves worthy stewards of the Commonwealth's proud tradition of nearly four centuries of orderly democratic processes.

## Your Questions Answered by Recman

BY Frank English, Records and Information Management Analyst

Editor's Note: "Recman" is our general e-mail address for records management questions: recman@lva.lib.va.us. Questions and answers selected for publication are limited to those that the compiler believes may have a wide audience or general interest. Names and agencies of the correspondents are not published. Please contact us if you have a question.

### *Does the State Records Center shred records?*

The records center does shred records for state agencies and localities, for a fee, on a first come, first serve basis after records stored in the State Records Center have been shredded. For further information on shredding contact the State Records Center at 804-236-3705. There is a charge for shredding services. You can find these fees at <http://www.lva.lib.va.us/whatwedo/records/manuals/00m-ch9.htm#sc>.

### *Is it your network administrator's responsibility to preserve e-mail?*

Your e-mail server is the electronic equivalent of your agency/locality mailroom. Its only function is to route the mail to the correct addressee. Would you expect your mailroom clerk to be responsible for saving all your traditional mail? No! Neither should you expect your network administrator to make decisions on each individual piece of e-mail. Depending on your agency/locality policy, each e-mail user is responsible for preserving e-mail that qualifies as a record for the full retention listed on retention schedules. For more information see:

<http://www.lva.lib.va.us/whatwedo/records/electron/em-pol.htm>.

### *Why can't I use the Records Management forms that are in "pdf" format?*

First, you must have Adobe Acrobat Reader loaded on your computer. Contact your Agency/Locality Tech Support or go to Adobe's web site at: <http://www.adobe.com/support/downloads/main.html>. After obtaining the appropriate software, the blank forms can be printed out. If you want to use the interactive forms, it is usually quicker to save the file to your hard drive, then fill in the form.

## Miscellaneous Files

### **General Schedule Being Distributed**

The records officers that we have listed as locality registrars will be receiving GS-1 with this mailing. This schedule applies only to locality registrars and boards of elections. The most recent versions for all LVA general schedules can be found on our Web site.

### **Kick Off Events For Virginia Records and Information Management Week, March 31–April 4, 2003**

Two separate events, a continental breakfast sponsored by VAGARA, followed by a presentation, Managing Your E-mail by Robert Nawrocki, CRM, our Electronic Records Coordinator, will be held on March 31st. The breakfast will be from 8:30 to 8:55 am at the Library of Virginia, followed by Bob's presentation at 9:00 A.M. We encourage all state and local government employees to attend. Feel free to attend the breakfast, or the presentation, or both. There is no charge for either.

So that we may have an approximate count, please register for the e-mail session at: <http://www.lva.lib.va.us/whatwedo/records/retrain/index.htm>. For more information on other activities during the week, see the "Workshops" section in this newsletter or go to our Web site. Additional information will be posted to our Web site as it becomes available.

### **Virginia Public Records Management Manual Undergoing Revision**

We are currently drafting a revision to the Virginia Public Records Management Manual. We would appreciate any of your suggestions, comments, criticisms or recommendations. If you have any ideas, please contact John Breeden at 804-692-3612 or jbreeden@lva.lib.va.us.

### **Virginia Public Records Act is being Reviewed**

The Library of Virginia is reviewing the Virginia Public Records Act. Since its adoption in the late 1970's the Act has undergone numerous piecemeal revisions. Some of the sections are no longer accurate. An internal committee has been formed of interested parties to begin work on the Act – line-by-line. If you have any suggestions please contact us at 804-692-3600 or via e-mail (recman@lva.lib.va.us).

### **Thank You!**

The editor would like to thank Dick Harrington for his tremendous contributions to this newsletter. His timely and informative articles will be sorely missed.

